

**Abstract 474**

**TITLE:** HIV Risk Factors in California Women

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**BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES:** Recently, attention has been focused on women and HIV infection. Various reports describe an increase in HIV positivity in women and a dramatic increase in the proportion of female AIDS cases. Other studies have shown a stable or declining prevalence in California. However, few studies have systematically and thoroughly examined the risk factors that are associated with HIV infection in women.

**METHODS:** We used data from the State of California, Office of AIDS, for female clients who received an HIV test through publicly-funded voluntary testing from July 1, 1994, through June 30, 1996 (n = 243,609). Logistic regression analysis was used to determine behavioral variables significantly associated with a positive HIV antibody test result.

**RESULTS:** Of the clients, 1,129 (0.5%) were HIV positive. Having a known HIV positive partner had the highest association with HIV positivity in this sample (OR = 7.80; 95% CI = 1.90, 9.10). Other significant risks for women were receiving money for sex (OR = 1.91; 95% CI = 1.51, 2.41), being an injection drug user (OR = 1.64; 95% CI = 1.33, 2.02), use of crack cocaine (OR = 1.56; 95% CI = 1.22, 1.99), or having an injection drug-using partner (OR = 1.33; 95% CI = 1.12, 1.58).

**CONCLUSIONS:** Risk factors for women found here confirmed previous research. Risk factors found elsewhere such as number of partners or STD history were not associated with HIV positivity for women in this analysis. The distinction between risk of exposure and risk of transmission was proposed. HIV transmission and exposure risks for women associated with seroconversion appear to be readily identifiable in HIV counseling sessions allowing for effective HIV test counseling. The high percentage of HIV positive women with identifiable risks and the low prevalence of HIV in this sample suggest that indiscriminate testing of women for HIV is not cost effective.

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